Saint Paul Planning Commission City Hall Conference Center 15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Minutes April 9, 2010

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, April 9, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Mmes. Donnelly-Cohen, Halverson, Merrigan, Smitten, Thao, Wencl, Young;

Present: and Messrs. Alton, Connolly, Gelgelu, Goodlow, Kramer, Nelson, Spaulding,

Ward and Wickiser.

Commissioners Ms. *Porter, and Messrs. *Commers, *Fernandez, and *Schertler.

Absent:

*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Luis Pereira, Josh Williams, Sarah Zorn,

and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes March 26, 2010.

MOTION: Commissioner Alton moved approval of the minutes of March 26, 2010.

Commissioner Gelgelu seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Donnelly-Cohen announced that the Mayor received notice of the resignation of Michael Margulies from the Planning Commission. The Mayor will now be looking for a new appointment to the Planning Commission.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond reported that last Wednesday the City Council held a public hearing on the floodplain ordinance amendments. One person testified, Tom Dimond, who brought up the same issue that he raised at the Planning Commission hearing. There was little discussion and the ordinance will be on next week's Council agenda for final adoption. At the same meeting the City Council considered the appeal of Charles Brost to a decision of the Planning Commission denying a change of nonconforming use from auto repair to outdoor auto sales. The appeal was denied on a vote of 7-0. The City Council also considered the application of DMB LLC at 780 Rice Street to rezone from B3 General Business to I1 Industrial. The Planning Commission had recommended denial and the application was denied on a 7-0 vote.

A listing of all the applications to this year's Neighborhood STAR Program funding cycle was handed out to the Commissioners. This year instead of having two funding cycles, one for large grants and loans and one for small grants, the STAR Board is considering all applications together. If there are any questions let Ms. Drummond know and she can get more information as

requested.

IV. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

Four items will come before the staff Site Plan Review Committee on April 13, 2010. They are: Parks and Recreation - Parking lot reconstruction at 1100 Hamline Avenue North; Ordway Center Loading Dock – truck dock renovation at 345 Washington Street; University of St. Thomas Anderson Athletic Facility Veranda - new concrete veranda at 2115 Summit Avenue; Walgreens - three new commercial buildings and parking lot at 2101 Ford Parkway.

OLD BUSINESS

#10-115-751 Ted and Lynn LLC – Rezoning from RM2 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Residential to TN2 Traditional Neighborhood. 1389-1405 Hawley Street between Cottage and Arlington. (*Patricia James*, 651/266-6639)

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the rezoning. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#10-106-605 Hammernick Hill – Variances of TN design standards: building size of 10,000 sq. ft. permitted, 20,782 sq. ft. proposed; floor area ratio of 0.5 required, 0.286 proposed; and window/door openings 30% of front elevation required, 25.8% proposed. 1396 Rice Street, NE corner at Cottage. (*Patricia James*, 651/266-6639)

Commissioner Spaulding asked if the window variance was requested because the grade changed.

Commissioner Kramer explained that the façade of the building was taller, and in order to achieve the 30% standard, they would have had to put some windows in a spot that did not make any useful sense.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the variances subject to an additional condition. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

#10-121-038 Jim and Michael Johnsen – Rezoning portions of parcels at 260 Clarence and 1365 Burns from R4 One Family Residential to B2 Community Business. 1347 Burns, NE corner at Clarence. (*Luis Pereira*, 651/266-6591)

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the rezoning. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#10-121-081 Obbs Bar – Variance for number of off-street parking spaces and driveway setback from residential property. 1347 Burns Avenue, NE corner at Clarence. (*Luis Pereira*, 651/266-6591)

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the variances subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#10-119-666 MCD Agency LLC – Rezoning from TN2 Traditional Neighborhood to B2 Community Business. 670 Juno Avenue, SE corner at Osceola. (*Luis Pereira*, 651/266-6591)

Commissioner Young asked about possible shared parking with some of the surrounding parking lots as an alternative to developing this parking lot.

Commissioner Kramer stated that there are circumstances associated with this case related to a Board of Zoning Appeals variance, and therefore the applicant needs to provide additional parking. This lot does not accommodate all of the required parking so even if this is approved, the applicant would still need to pursue additional shared parking.

Luis Pereira, PED staff said that the applicant actually has informal verbal agreements to use some of the parking at the bank as well as the adjacent sandwich shop, however the owners of these establishments have not been willing to sign on to a formal shared parking agreement. The BZA approval required them to provide more parking, whether it is through shared means or through an additional off-street lot.

Commissioner Nelson asked about the rationale for not proposing a VP zone as opposed to B2. Currently this is zoned TN2, which provides some design standards for any future building on this site. B2 eliminates any of those design standards should a building be built in the future.

Commissioner Kramer said that the Commission must act on the application that was submitted. The Shamrock's parcel is B2, so the parking lot would also become B2. Once they create the parking at this location, it becomes part of their required parking. They cannot just sell off required parking and put a building on the lot.

Mr. Pereira added that this parcel is very small - it is just over 4,000 square feet – and has a triangular shape. It is not clear how much of a building could be built on the lot without acquiring more property to enlarge it.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the rezoning. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#10-121-250 Shamrock's – Variances for new parking lot: 1) 300 feet maximum from building served permitted, 450 feet proposed; and 2) setback from Osceola right-of-way (7ft. required, 4 ft. proposed). 670 Juno Avenue, SE corner at Juno and Osceola. (*Luis Pereira*, 651/266-6591)

Commissioner Kramer reported that the Zoning Committee laid this case over to the April 15, 2010 meeting.

#10-114-639 Clear Wire (Groveland Rec Center) – Conditional Use Permit for a wireless communications antenna on a 100 ft monopole. 1961 St. Clair Avenue, between Prior and Kenneth. (Sarah Zorn, 651/266-6570)

The case has been withdrawn.

#10-116-425 Clear Wireless LLC (Eastview Playground) – Conditional Use Permit for a wireless communications antenna on a 100 ft monopole. 1675 5th Street East, area bounded by Kennard, 5th, Flaundrau, Margaret Street alley. (*Sarah Zorn*, 651/266-6570)

Commissioner Kramer reported that the Zoning Committee laid this case over to the April 15, 2010 meeting.

#10-123-489 University of St. Thomas – Modification of conditional use permit requirement that off-street parking spaces for college athletic facilities be within 600 feet of the building to be served. 2115 Summit Avenue, area bounded by Selby, Cleveland, Grand, Cretin, Mississippi River Blvd., Goodrich, and Summit. (*Josh Williams*, 651/266-6659)

Commissioner Kramer reported that the Zoning Committee laid this case over to the April 15, 2010 meeting.

#10-122-449 St. Thomas Student Center – Site plan review for new student center. 2115 Summit Avenue. (*Tom Beach*, 651/266-9086)

Commissioner Kramer reported that the Zoning Committee laid this case over to the April 15, 2010 meeting.

Commissioner Kramer announced the items on the agenda for the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, April 15, 2010.

V. <u>Back to the Future</u> – A presentation from the Urban Land Institute's Connecting Transportation and Land Use Systems Initiative, presented by Kristina Smitten.

Kristina Smitten, Saint Paul Planning Commissioner, gave a presentation from the Urban Land Institute's Connecting Transportation and Land Use Systems Initiative. She said that a few months ago she saw a draft of this presentation that the Urban Land Institute was putting together. Given the conversations about creation of the new Transportation Committee, she thought it might be helpful to bring it to the Planning Commission as background information. The Urban Land Use Institute is a national organization and they have a very active local chapter. The local chapter focuses on housing, the environment and connecting land use and transportation. There is an organization called the Regional Council of Mayors, which Mayor Coleman and Mayor Rybak participate in as well as 34 other regional mayors. It's an opportunity for people to come together and think about our regional competitiveness from an economic standpoint and livability standpoint. In our region we have high expectations for the way that we compete in our education systems, business, arts and community development. We have high expectations for our region and we expect that to continue into the future.

Ms. Smitten talked about preserving prosperity and the quality of life. The bad economy, energy security and climate change present significant challenges. This presentation is focused on the critical connection between transportation, infrastructure and quality places. It also discusses recent state and federal funding, and promoting criteria for transportation investments that support livable communities. The number of vehicles in the U.S. puts pressure on our environment. Sixty-eight percent of petroleum in the U.S. is burned for transportation, and 28% of carbon emissions threating our climate are from transportation. The nation's dependence on

foreign oil has doubled since the oil crisis in the 1970s.

A new reality is emerging. Transit ridership has increased. There is a decline in households with children. The aging Baby Boomers and the young Millennials also known as Generation Y or the eco boomers will make a major impact on development patterns moving forward. In 2004, a national survey revealed that many boomers are looking for a low maintenance lifestyle that supports independence and connection. Many have made third places like Starbucks, Barnes & Noble, and Borders their community centers. However the Millennials make up the largest share of the U.S. population. Met. Council data projects that from 2010 and beyond the Millennial cohort will be larger than that of the baby boomers in the Minneapolis/St. Paul region. When it comes to choosing places to live millennials want choices, connectivity, convenience and they are willing to pay for it. For many years our development patterns have been shaped by the fact that we could essentially build anything anywhere and it would sell. A 2006 national study predicts that in 2025 the demand for attached and small housing will exceed the current supply by 35 million units. And by 2025 we will have an over supply of single family homes on large lots.

What we are learning is that the trade up product type that is disconnected from destinations and services is not going to be in high demand. As we look to the future we can see that the demand for convenient, connected and walkable places is growing. The new market requires that we forge a more intimate connection between transportation and place. We must go back to the future by rediscovering the traditional town form. This is an opportunity to add variety, connectivity and proximity to our communities and to position our region for sustainable prosperous growth. We need to step up our investment in transit and roads. The state has a plan to build up the metro region's transit system and to modernize the freeway but both are significantly under funded. We need to revise our policies and regulations to allow for creating the kind of places that the new market demands. In closing, Commissioner Smitten showed some examples of how transportation and land use investments work together.

Commissioner Thao wanted to know if the Urban Land Institute thought about equitable development. Part of the reason why there are big disparities is people who have low skill labor often work at manufacturing jobs that are in suburban areas. People live in the city because of housing affordability but the jobs are out in the suburbs. Are they accounting for those equability issues as disparities are increasing?

Ms. Smitten said there are conversations around where employment is and the need to have manufacturing in the city to create those kinds of jobs and connecting to people who need them. In the Jim Solem presentation there are some interesting numbers about suburban housing, affordability and jobs. Thinking about what our central cities are providing versus what our suburban communities are providing and the way that we have developed, it is difficult to get transit from Saint Paul to some of the suburban areas. One of the ULI initiatives is housing and they have a program called rethinking housing, where it is really focused on the housing and jobs connection more than the land use and transportation connection.

Commissioner Wencl commented about increasing the freeway system and land use. Freeways take up a lot of land and to increase that amount means you have less area for people to create a livable community. Freeways separate communities and use land that could be used for other things. It is not a good use of our land.

Ms. Smitten said that their approach is not to increase freeways, but to increase transportation

infrastructure that supports more transit and connectivity. It is important to maintain our existing infrastructure, but focusing new investments on transit and connections with our existing infrastructure.

Commissioner Spaulding said that he knows there is a lot of research on climate change which talks about this fundamental connection between land use and transportation. It is important to look at the kinds of transportation investments that would support a more walkable, livable community. This can have profound impacts. Long term goals could be met by simply designing better land use forms.

Ms. Smitten said there is a book called "Growing Cooler" that the Urban Land Institute references. The data is there, saying if we continue to drive and build the way that we have it will have profound impacts on greenhouse gas emissions.

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, said at the next meeting of the committee there will be consideration of a resolution to initiate a zoning study to update the official map in the Zoning Code to a Geographic Information System (GIS) format.

VII. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Commissioner Wencl announced that the next Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting is on Wednesday, April 14, 2010.

VIII. Communications Committee

Commissioner Smitten had no report.

IX. Task Force Reports

Commissioner Kramer said that in May there will be an open house to review plans for the Phalen-Keller Regional Park Master Plan. This open house is on the first Thursday in May at the Phalen Park Pavilion from 5:00-8:00 p.m. An official flyer will be sent out to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Smitten said that in the past Commissioner Gordon was on the STAR Board. Since he is not on the STAR Board or Planning Commission, does the Planning Commission have a liaison for the STAR Board? Also, what is the total amount of funds available? This proposal sheet shows the amount of grants and loans requested, but do we know how much is available for grant and loan resources?

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, said that in the administrative code it does not specify that there be a Planning Commission member who is also a STAR Board member. However, Michele Swanson in PED who staffs the Neighborhood STAR Board said they really did appreciate having a Planning Commission member on the STAR Board. About a month or two ago Ms. Drummond sent a notice to Planning Commissioners stating there were some vacancies on the STAR Board and encouraging anyone on the commission who was interested to apply for one of those openings. The STAR Board sees it as a valuable link between the planning work and

investments we are making as a city. If there are still openings Ms. Drummond will send out another notice to the Planning Commission. To answer the second question, typically the STAR Board does not list the amount available. And it is probably because it fluctuates until they get a firmer total as they get closer to making their final recommendations.

Commissioner Connolly said that he is an applicant for the Neighborhood STAR Program and he wanted to know if that is a conflict of interest.

Ms. Drummond said that the Planning Commission does not get involved with Neighborhood STAR Program recommendations, so there is no conflict of interest.

Χ.	Old Business	
	None.	
XI.	New Business	
	None.	
XII.	Adjournment	
	Meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m.	
Sonja Planni	ded and prepared by Butler, Planning Commission Secretary ing and Economic Development Department, f Saint Paul	
Respectfully submitted,		Approved(Date)
Donna Drummond Planning Director		Marilyn Porter Secretary of the Planning Commission

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